



## MENNONITE EDUCATION AGENCY 2017-2019 REPORT TO DELEGATES

*Greetings from MEA! In this report, you can get a glimpse of some of the work we do in cooperation with six colleges/universities/seminaries, two Ministerios Hispanos programs, more than two dozen primary and secondary schools in the Mennonite Schools Council (MSC), Mennonite Early Childhood Network (MECN), and others. Cultivating energy and synergy for the whole of Anabaptist Christian Education, MEA connects schools and programs with MC USA congregations and the world, broadening access to education, resources, and training grounded in Anabaptist values. Some of the activities and initiatives of the past year include the following:*

### **Introduction**

*"Inspired by the Gospel's vision of the reign of God, graduates are equipped to embody Christ's love, participate in and lead vibrant congregations, and witness to their faith. Within communities of learning, oriented toward biblical visions of shalom, they are formed in practices of nonviolence and peacebuilding and are prepared to confront racism and other forms of discrimination, practice restorative justice and offer hope for the healing of brokenness and division."* The above statement is part of the vision for Mennonite Education that emerged out of the work of the Higher Education Future Church School Relations Committee. The committee was to facilitate the creation of a new paradigm for church-school relationships through the engagement of Mennonite Church USA institutions of higher education and the church and its constituency groups.

The group presented its recommendations for a revised mutual understanding and a common structure that will support long-term connections and linkages between MC USA church-related institutions of higher education and an educationally supportive denomination. This included the creation of the [Mennonite Higher Education Association](#) (MHEA) to increase collaboration between the six-member schools and the [Mennonite Education Agency](#) (MEA) to advance educational opportunity, excellence, and affordability. The new direction has been affirmed by the Mennonite higher education institutions, MC USA Executive Board and MEA.

The adoption of the Mennonite Higher Education Church/School Relations Agreement, outlining a new way for Mennonite Church USA to relate, partner and support each other, presents a unique opportunity to look and envision a new future for all.

### **MEA Board planning for [Strategic Direction](#)**

In collaboration with its partners, MEA has been working on the development of a new strategic plan to fulfill the new vision and to guide the MEA as it walks with, empowers, and partners with schools, conferences, and educational programs in and beyond Mennonite Church USA.

Mennonite Education Agency is looking forward to the development of a strategic plan to serve and support the needs and missions of our educational partners and Mennonite Church USA. All the changes (and opportunities) in the educational system are taking place within the context of significant realignment happening in Mennonite Church USA and the transition of most denominational agency leaders.

The MEA Board and staff, administrators from elementary, secondary and higher education schools, MCUSA Executive Board and staff members, and representatives of the Hispanic Ministries Program have focused on the following areas to help guide the further development of a new strategic plan for MEA:

- 1. Community-** MEA and its partners work together and develop a deeper and more functional community.
- 2. Communication-** MEA will lead and grow by developing effective bi-directional communication (both internal and external communication) emphasizing Anabaptist Mennonite Education and its programs and services.
- 3. Collaborative Initiatives –** MEA will nurture present collaborative initiatives, will work with partners to develop new collaborative efforts and when helpful will be a member of the collaborative efforts

4. **Services and Resources-** MEA will provide resources and services that are valuable to and requested by its individual member's schools, educational partners (MSC and MHEA), educational programs (i.e., IBA, SeBaH, ALI, etc.) and congregations, conferences and denominational offices of Mennonite Church USA.

At the March 2019 MEA Board meeting, the following values were identified to guide the work of MEA. These values came up through a discernment process with the MEA board, MHEA Presidents, MSC Executive Committee, and leaders of Hispanic Educational Programs involved around the table and in small group discussions *Christ-centered, Innovative collaboration, Trustworthy relationship, Culturally informed* and *Responsiveness*.

**A few accomplishments during the last biannual:**

- The **creation and adoption** of the recommendations put forth by the **Higher Education Future Church/School Relations Committee**.
- The **successful selection of highly qualified new presidents** for Mennonite Higher Education institutions
- In **MEA's work and partnering with the Mennonite Schools Council**, we would identify the following significant accomplishments:
  - The development of [Encounter](#). The curriculum, developed by classroom teachers, is a "prekindergarten to Grade 12 Bible curriculum for Anabaptist/Christian faith formation.
  - The successful accreditation of five Mennonite Schools Council institutions; Bethany Christian Schools, Dock Mennonite Academy, Freeman Academy, Quakertown Christian School and Lititz Area Mennonite School (non-MSC institution).
- The development of a new **MEA strategic plan** (in progress).
- The work of the [Investment Committee](#), a fund in which various schools, colleges, universities, seminaries, congregations, area conferences and other programs (*18 different institutions/organizations*) within Mennonite Church USA have partnered with MEA for the management and investment of certain endowment funds, scholarship funds and other

financial assets owned by the institutions that are integrated into an investment pool.

- The work of the [Hispanic Ministries program](#), including Anabaptist Biblical Institute (IBA) and Seminario Bíblico Anabautista Hispano (SeBAH). IBA has grown from 33 to 42 study centers, with four prospective study centers being on the planning stages. Present centers are located in 10 states and Mexico. Centers are serving an average of 250-300 students during the year. SeBAH has students in 7 states, Puerto Rico, and Colombia. It is presently used by three denominations (Mennonite Church USA, Church of the Brethren, Mennonite Brethren). SeBAH is a university-level Spanish language online seminary program
- The continued increase of partners with the **Mennonite Learning Network**. Present partners include the MBA Collaborative, the Doctor of Nursing, ALI Courses, MSC, SeBAH, MMN, and a partnership with Mennonites of Colombia, Guatemala and Mexico.
- MEA has been engaged in significant work in the area of intercultural competence.

**MEA Leadership Transition**

[Carlos Romero](#), Executive Director, will be transitioning out of his role at MEA effective July 2019. [Thomas Stuckey](#) of West Unity, Ohio, has been appointed an interim executive director of Mennonite Education Agency (MEA).

**MEA Financial Statement**

Please [click](#) the following link for MEA Audited Financial Statements. Thank you for your continued prayers and financial support for the educational ministries of MC USA.

Blessings in Christ,



Carlos Romero  
Executive Director